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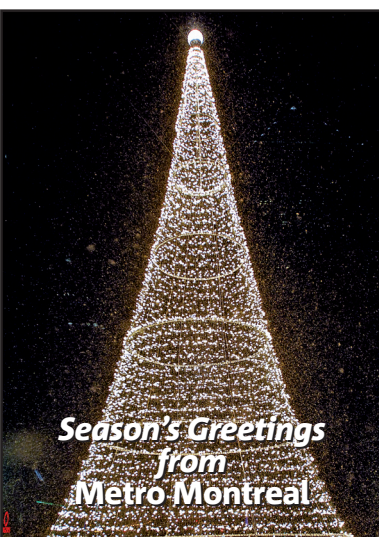
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Next edition

Metro will not
be publishing on
Christmas Day.
The next edition
will appear on
Friday, Dec. 26.



Season's Greetings
from
Metro Calgary



Season's Greetings
from
Metro Montreal



Season's Greetings
from
Metro Toronto



Season's Greetings
from
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Edmontonians urged to sort recyclables

City officials are urging Edmontonians to properly sort recyclables in blue bags and blue bins this holiday season, as waste volumes usually increase about 50 per cent this time of year. **METRO EDMONTON**

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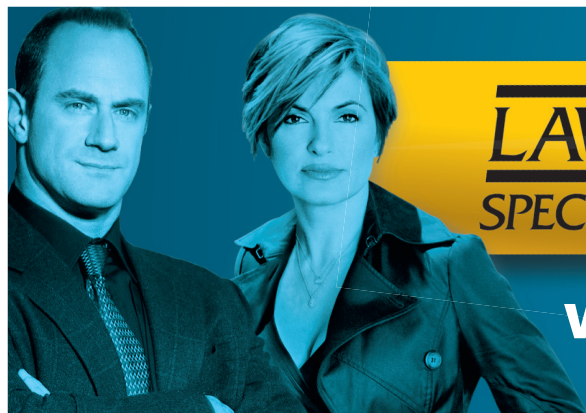
Local



Skating rinks open

Starting today, all public skating rinks and toboggan hills will be open for use. The recent blast of cold weather and snow have frozen ponds and added enough of the white stuff to local recreation spots to make them safe and easy to use. For a list of locations, visit www.edmonton.ca, or call 3-1-1.

METRO EDMONTON



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7-year-old was stabbed: Autopsy

TRAGEDY An autopsy has confirmed that a seven-year-old who was tragically killed on Sunday was stabbed in the chest.

An investigation has concluded the boy's death was a result of a fight between him and his five-year-old brother.

The Criminal Code of Canada prevents any charges being laid against the boy, who is too young to be criminally responsible for his actions.

Victim Services and Child and Family Services are assisting the family through their grief period.

METRO EDMONTON



Video Stephen Harper's competition for Canadian newsmaker of the year at metronews.ca/canada

Check metronews.ca to stay up-to-date over the holidays with news, horoscopes and games.



Make room at the inn

Reverend aims to help women escape sexual exploitation

GEN HANDLEY
for Metro Edmonton



An annual campaign is looking to help prostitutes get off the streets and start living a normal life.

After a decade of helping those in need, the No Room at the Inn fundraiser is setting its charitable sights on Crossroads Downtown, a housing project that helps women escape the dangerous life of sexual exploitation.

"We'd like to see them get off the streets and change their lives around," said Rev. Don Mayne, co-chair of No Room at the Inn. "When you've seen how many women have been killed and dumped in the fields around Edmonton, it's good that something's being done to help them."

In the past, No Room at the Inn has helped other organizations such as

"We'd like to see them get off the streets and change their lives around."

Rev. Don Mayne

Wings Over Providence and the Rotary Centre for New Canadians, in which they raised \$54,500 last year — the largest amount ever.

This year's donations will specifically go to helping the women furnish their Crossroads homes with furniture and appliances, making life a little more comfortable. When they find their bearings and are ready to leave, they are allowed to bring their furnishings with them to their new home.

"It allows them to live in a way that they wouldn't have been able to accomplish otherwise," Mayne said.

BEN LEMPHERS/FOR METRO EDMONTON



Rev. Don Mayne of Strathearn United Church co-chairs an initiative called No Room at the Inn, which asks local churches to give a portion of their Christmas Eve service donations toward a ministry called Crossroads Downtown.

metro life panel

Top 2008 events

- 1. Falling oil prices and their impact on Alberta.
- 2. Ed Stelmach wins a massive majority.
- 3. NDP's Linda Duncan defeats Conservative MP Rahim Jaffer.
- 4 (tied). Edmonton Oilers sold to Daryl Katz.
- 4 (tied). 500 migratory birds killed in Syncrude tailings pond.
- 6. Mark Twitchell allegedly kills a stranger by bringing a horror script to real life.
- 7 (tied). Trolley system to be scrapped by 2010.
- 7 (tied). Liberal Leader Kevin Taft steps down.
- 9 (tied). Thomas Svekla found guilty of murder.
- 9 (tied). Stelmach announces climate strategy.



Ed Stelmach

SOURCE: AS VOTED BY METRO LIFE PANEL MEMBERS

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Shoppers prep for most frantic retail day of year

VICTORIA HANDYSIDES
victoria.handysides@metronews.ca

Unless you're in good with Santa, today is the last day to scramble for those last minute items to stack underneath your Christmas tree.

For those who haven't started at all, standing in lines and fighting against crowds is an absolute certainty in the last, panic-stricken hours before Christmas tomorrow.

"It's absolute panic

mode," said Mayfield Wal-Mart manager Gige Pucci. "People are fighting to get in the door when we close."

Every other Wal-Mart in the city is open 24 hours on Christmas Eve, but the Mayfield store is a madhouse because of its 6 p.m. closing time.

"It's mostly men that haven't prepared," Pucci said. "They're literally running into the building when we open the doors."

Though for some shoppers, the decision to start at the zero-hour is not

for want.

Last minute shopper Jason Van Der Lee said he and his family decided not to spend money on gifts this year because of current economic uncertainty, but the decision to exchange gifts was made yesterday.

"I hate going to the mall," Van Der Lee said. "There are trillions of other people that do the exact same thing and go mill around the mall looking for objects that someone probably doesn't really need, just to spend money on something."



It's crunch time at Edmonton malls as today is the last day to shop for loved ones before the big day. Last-minute shoppers jammed city stores seeking that perfect gift.

BEAUFORT/PHOTO FOR METRO EDMONTON



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Spirit of giving has dark side, charity representatives say

VICTORIA HANDYSIDES
victoria.handysides@metronews.ca

Every year, the Christmas Bureau of Edmonton is forced to turn away dozens that attempt to take advantage of the charity, and this year was no exception.

"People are not always what they say they are," said Christmas Bureau spokeswoman Dianne Brown. "We have to be very cognizant because there are enough truly poor people out there in the community."

More than 6,000 hamper of food were delivered to needy Edmontonians on the weekend. More than 600 people walked in to the charity yesterday

to pick up coupons for food from Sobey's, Christmas Bureau gifts, and Adopt-a-Teen cards.

"Some people come to us for greed rather than need," Brown said, adding people approach the charity with rehearsed sob stories, and blatantly lie for free handouts, and that volunteers have been weeding out fakers for the past few days.

The charity offers help on the basis of need. More than 22,000 families are given food each year.

Brown said only one per cent of people are turned away, but were it not for grinchers trying to steal Christmas, screening processes could be expedited.

"Some people come to us for greed rather than need."

Dianne Brown

Cops assaulted after alleged dispute

ARREST A local man is facing charges after police responded to a report of an assault in a Whyte Avenue-area home.

On Sunday, police went to a home in the area of 106 Street and 83 Avenue and were allegedly assaulted when arresting the accused. After investigation, police determined a

domestic dispute took place, in which a woman was assaulted and injured. The officers were not injured.

Sasa Stanimirovic is charged with assault with a weapon, possession of weapon, uttering threats, unlawful confinement and resisting arrest. **METRO EDMONTON**

News in brief

LEADER Joe Anglin, a Rimbey-area farmer, has been officially announced as the new Alberta

Green Party leader after former party leader George Read resigned. **METRO EDMONTON**

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B.C. airports struggle to clear backlog

Thousands of travellers were hoping to salvage their holiday plans as airports across B.C. scrambled yesterday to clear a backlog of snow-trapped passengers. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

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Canada



TARA WALTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Sister Margaret O'Keefe poses in front of the mirror where she first saw herself in the habit 63 years ago. Sister Margaret, now 83, became a nun at the age of 20. She and buddhist teacher Michael Gayner shared their thoughts on inner peace.

Finding inner peace

For Michael Gayner, the vehicle is meditation. For Sister Margaret O'Keefe, it is prayer. For both, finding meaningful peace is tied to the practical action of helping to bring peace in to the world.

Gayner, 47, is a teacher at the thriving downtown Toronto Buddhist community centre.

It's there that Sister Margaret O'Keefe, an 83-year-old Catholic nun and retired schoolteacher, recently spent three days in silent retreat with the other nuns.

There is a common thread running through conversations with these two spiritual teachers — that inner peace naturally flows into helping others find peace, too.

Michael Gayner

Q: How do you find peace in the city?

A: I don't seek peace through meditation, nor do I find it there. To find real peace for all people, you would have to over-



Michael Gayner

look a lot of injustice in the world. That's not what it's about for me.

Q: So, you see the density of the city as an opportunity?

A: If you become dependent on the mountains or the country for sanity, that's problematic. There's a weakness in being who you want to be.

Q: Do the Buddhist teachings apply in your everyday life of getting around the city, answering e-mail, meeting people?

A: The saying is: "Don't wait in ambush." It arises as a teaching to deal with

your plotting. Like, when you're walking down the street but you're thinking: "I'm going to get him!" or "Here's what I'm going to say to him!" I find myself doing that sometimes and the saying comes to mind.

Margaret O'Keefe

Q: How do you find peace in the city?

A: It's not the place, but the practices that sanctify.

Q: How do you define peace?

A: I think peace is the fruit of your decision to be faithful to your call. It's not outside of you. You can't find peace in things. It has to come from inside.

Q: Is this a very peaceful place during your annual Christmas retreat?

A: This year, we had a talk about hope, which really affected me. I was applying it to myself and it helped me a lot. And, you know, peace is a lot like hope. You make a choice to be peaceful, just like you make a choice to be hopeful.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Long recovery for storm survivor

RESCUE A Toronto-area woman managed to survive for three days buried deep in a snowbank, most likely because the snow helped to insulate her, police said Tuesday.

Donna Molnar, 55, was last seen on Friday when she left her home west of Toronto in a snowstorm to get baking supplies. Her van was found abandoned by the side of a windswept rural road late the next day.



Donna Molnar

Rescuers approaching the spot found Molnar, who was suffering from hypothermia. She is now in hospital in serious but stable condition.

Upon arriving at the hospital, Molnar was put on painkillers while doctors assessed her injuries. They indicated her recovery would be long as her body temperature had dropped to about 30 C and was hypothermic.

REUTERS

News in brief

KIDS A panel on infertility has recently posted an online survey asking for people to share their experiences at Ontario.ca/creatingfamilies. The panel is expected to report back to the minister of children on the need for publicly funded in-vitro fertilization treatments for Ontarians. One treatment is roughly \$10,000. Quebec Premier Jean Charest promised shortly before he was re-elected last month to publicly fund two in-vitro fertilization treatments for women unable to conceive.

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A Mexican beauty queen and international pageant winner has been detained by police along with suspected drug traffickers who had assault rifles and cash. Laura Zuniga, the 23-year-old Miss Sinaloa from the marijuana-producing Mexican state, was held with seven men at a military checkpoint in Guadalajara, police said. **REUTERS**

World



Bush passes pension relief

U.S. President George W. Bush yesterday signed into law a measure intended to help company pension plans and retirees that have been hard hit by the financial crisis. With the law, companies with healthy multi-employer pension plans hurt by the stock market decline will not have to make drastic contribution increases or worker benefit cutbacks that many companies had feared. **REUTERS**

Greek police bus shot

No one injured in shooting near university

Hundreds of anarchists chanting "Cops, pigs, murderers!" marched through Athens yesterday, hours after a gunman opened fire at a riot-police bus in a third week of anti-government protests.

An unidentified gunman shot at the bus carrying 19 officers when it stopped at traffic lights outside a university campus in eastern Athens at around 5 a.m.

Two bullets hit the bus, bursting a tire, but no one was injured in the inci-

"It's worrying us. We collected seven bullet cases from the spot."

Police spokesman Panagiotis Stathis

dent. It came after a two-day lull in Greece's worst riots in decades, sparked by the shooting of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos.

"It's worrying us," police spokesman Panagiotis Stathis told Mega TV. "We collected seven bullet cases from the spot."

A police official said the shots were believed to have come from the campus and were fired from a military weapon. Authorities are investigating a call from a previously unknown group called Public Action to a popular Greek news website claiming responsibility. **REUTERS**

Olmert orders Jerusalem barrier finished by 2010

MIDDLE EAST Israel must complete its Jerusalem barrier by 2010, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said yesterday, signalling plans to press ahead with a project that Palestinians condemn

as a major obstacle to any peace accord.

Of the 790-kilometre-long network of fences and walls Israel is building in and along the occupied West Bank, one-fifth runs

around Jerusalem, including key eastern parts of the holy city where Palestinians want a capital for future statehood. More than two-thirds of the barrier is finished. **REUTERS**

Syria Marching Santas



Students dressed as Santa Claus take part in a march yesterday, organized by Christian churches, to celebrate Christmas in Damascus.

Newsmaker of the Year



Obama seen as president of change

RISE TO POWER Barack Obama, who dominated headlines during his ascension to the U.S. presidency, is the newsmaker of the year, as chosen by Metro Canada editors.

His speech at Chicago's Grant Park on Nov. 4 was watched around the globe and had the excitement of a major sporting event.

Obama, who will be sworn in as the 44th U.S. president on Jan. 20, will be the first African-American to lead the world's most influential nation. His rise to power, 45 years after the height of the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King, inspired millions who saw him as someone whose hard work allowed him to break race barriers and succeed.

Adding to the exhilaration surrounding Obama the man is the sense of change he represents as compared to outgoing president George W. Bush.

Obama is seen as the anti-Bush, a leader who can restore the United States' image and improve the economy. **METRO CANADA**

Youth married at polygamist ranch

TEXAS Child neglect and abuse were widespread at an Eldorado polygamist ranch with at least a dozen girls forced into underage marriages, according to a report by state authorities.

Authorities raided the Yearning For Zion Ranch in April, removing over 400 children. Twelve girls, married between 12 and 15, are confirmed victims of sexual abuse and neglect, the report said. The compound was run by a Mormon sect called the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, which still practices polygamy. **REUTERS**

Wary Taiwan accepts pandas as goodwill gift from China

ASIA Two Taiwan legislators danced in giant panda costumes in parliament today to mock the much-ballyhooed arrival of two goodwill-gift pandas from China which they see as an unwelcome interference from the mainland.

China handed over Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan, whose names said together mean "unite," yesterday as relations between the two sides improve.

China claims Taiwan as part of "one China," a notion many in Taiwan resist, especially the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) that favours the island's formal declaration of independence from China.

Furry gifts

- Beijing has given pandas to nine countries including Japan, the United States and the former Soviet Union since 1957.

Panda lovers, particularly children and local media, should know the gift comes with political bite, the DPP lawmakers told reporters and colleagues with dances and paw gestures at a caucus office.

China has claimed Taiwan since the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949. It has vowed to bring the island under its rule, by force if necessary. **REUTERS**

News in brief

SINGAPORE More than 100 passengers stranded for six hours on the world's largest ferris wheel were evacuated and given medical treatment

after the attraction ground to a halt yesterday. The Singapore Flyer stopped working after a short circuit in one of its motor drivers cut its power. **REUTERS**

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Comment & Views

Comment

Getting over the holiday hump

LifeCycle

Denise Rudnicki

drudnicki@gmail.com

If you're celebrating Christmas with your family then this column is not for you. If you are experiencing your first Christmas following the breakup of your marriage, then read on.

That first Christmas is marked by self-pity, regret, sorrow and fear. That's

normal. That's even if you wanted the marriage to end.

I remember my own "first Christmas" five years ago in the new apartment, overwhelmed and incapable of making a Christmas for my two teenagers; succumbing to mother's guilt and putting up a small tree; feeling sick as I hung the decorations we'd collected as a family for 20 years; finding the surfing Santa Claus we'd bought on our honeymoon; putting out three Christmas stockings and leaving the fourth one in the box.

I remember their Dad's expensive gifts; my mea-

gre ones; my dumb decision to make pasta for dinner instead of turkey; feeling confused about what family traditions I should try to keep going for the kids; not caring about family traditions anymore; trying not to cry in front of them but sometimes failing; worrying about them; knowing they worried about me. What fun.



It's hard to believe when you are in that black hole of despair, when your home is gone and your kids aren't with you, when you would rather hide under the kitchen table than face Christmas on your own, that it could ever be anything but horrible. But like everything else, there's a right way and a wrong

way to get over the hump. You can either make an opportunity out of the fact that your life has changed or wallow. So make the right choice.

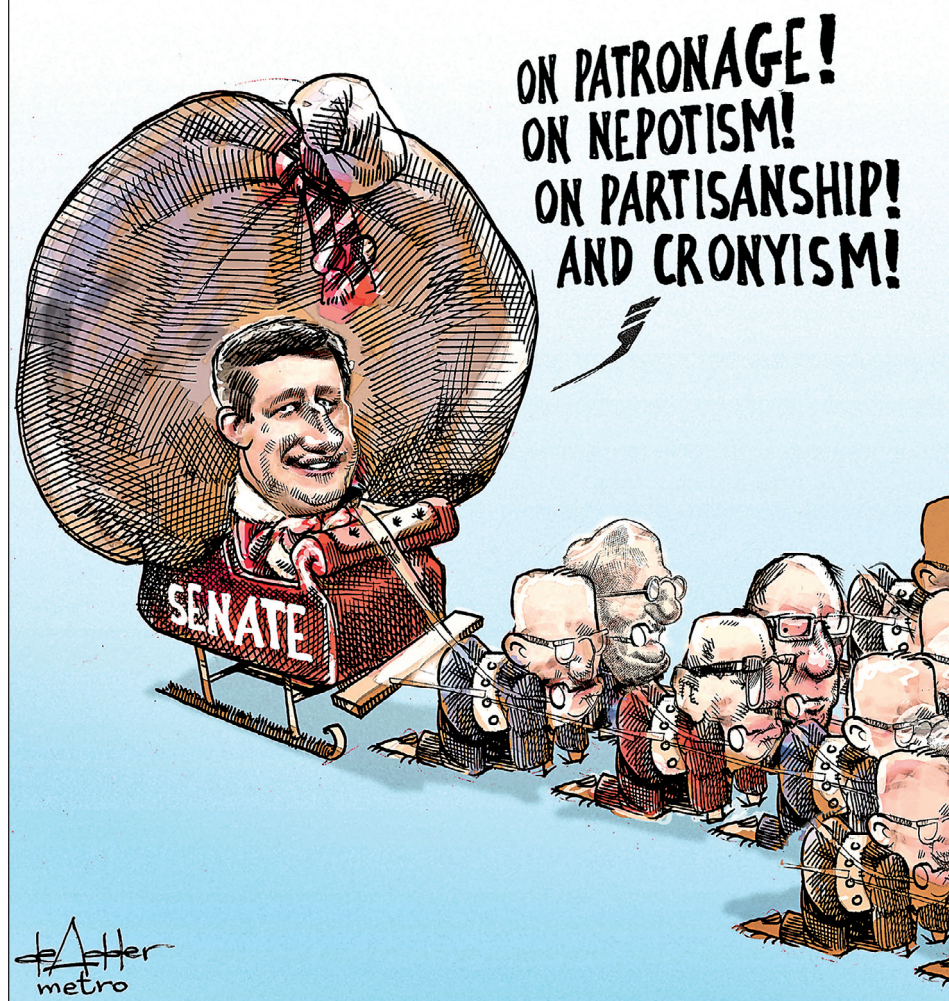
Get rid of your anger. Stop fighting with your ex. Become independent. Show your kids you can cope with anything. Become an example to them. Your kids would rather see Mom going for job interviews, determined to make a new life, than sobbing in her eggnog as she reads the forwarded Christmas card from her ex-mother-in-law. Keep a sense of humour, even if it's pretty black at first. Be-

lieve me, it does get better. You will reinvent yourself and you will be happy again.

Christmas is a wonderful time and you will figure out a combination of new and old ways of enjoying it and making it meaningful. So don't be too hard on yourself if you aren't perfect this first Christmas. Focus on the future, not the past. Love your kids. Love yourself. Do these things and it will be a merrier Christmas next year.

Denise Rudnicki is a West Coast-based writer, communications executive, and journalism instructor at Royal Roads University.

EIGHTEEN TORY SENATORS:



Word on the street: Do you find the holiday season stressful or relaxing?

Tracy Leblanc

Edmonton

A: I do find it stressful because I live in Ottawa and my family lives (here) — my luggage got lost and my flight came in at four in the morning.



Dave Mattes

Edmonton

A: Not (stressful) anymore. I finished my Christmas shopping so I think I'm good to go.



Kirsty MacRae

age 24, Ottawa

A: I find it relaxing. I did all my shopping online, so I don't have to go to the mall. And I got shipping deals, too.



David Blass

age 22, Calgary

A: I think the holidays are a very stressful time of year because it's always so busy everywhere.



Roger King

age 29, Halifax

A: In retail, it's stressful ... but I get four days off. It's like a good book, it builds up to a climax.



Maryanne Smith

age 26, Calgary

A: I find it very stressful actually because I work in retail. So it's been pretty hectic for me.



Shawn Jordan

age 33, Toronto

A: Relaxing, because I get to spend it with my girlfriend.



Leisha MacDonald

age 24, Ottawa

A: I don't find it stressful at all. This year, I'm trying to be more artistic ... I'm painting everyone's present.



It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: edmontonletters@metronews.ca

Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number — street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Agreement near on emergency spending jolt

The Obama administration is nearing an agreement with congressional Democrats on a bill intended to create three million jobs over two years, vice-president-elect Joe Biden said. **REUTERS**

9

Business

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Grocers the winners during a recession

In times of economic turmoil, it's good to be in the grocery business for more than the obvious reasons.

People still need to eat. While they can put off buying a bigger TV or the latest winter boot, they're still going to be in the grocery store. Every week.

Another well-known benefit of bad times is that consumers tend to cut out restaurant meals and do more home entertaining, one more plus for the local food retailer.

But a less obvious fact is that even as the most value-conscious customers

"The only one who loses is the consumer packaged-goods company."

Martin Weintraub

"trade down" to cheaper store brands, it can help boost the retailer's bottom line as store brands are more profitable for them.

And the move to private label products also gives the retailers more bargaining power with name-brand suppliers, who become more eager to jointly fund special

promotions to regain lost market share.

"The only one who loses is the consumer packaged-goods company," says Martin Weintraub, managing director of Karabus Management, a Toronto retail consulting firm.

So while other businesses may tear their hair at the thought of trying to survive what could be a long and deep recession, the chief financial officer of a major U.S. grocery chain recently told Weintraub: "I'm finally happy to be working in the grocery industry."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

metro life panel

Top 2008 events

1. Financial sector meltdown
2. Gasoline prices hitting an all-time high as oil costs a record \$147.27 US a barrel
3. TSX drops more than 800 points
4. Auto sector meltdown
5. Hudson's Bay Co. is purchased by American investor
6. Housing crisis
7. Canada posts its worst November job losses in 25 years
8. Conrad Black begins jail term
9. Zoom Airlines files for bankruptcy protection
10. Manufacturing sector meltdown

SOURCE: AS VOTED BY METRO LIFE PANEL MEMBERS

Belarus Mobile shopping



A shop assistant dressed as Snow Maiden sells food from a mobile shop in the Belarussian village of Letskovshchina yesterday. The mobile shop with a driver dressed as Father Frost and the Snow Maiden visits villages shortly before the Catholic Christmas.

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Canadian national basketball team member Andy Rautins equalled a Syracuse University record with nine three-pointers in an 82-71 Orange victory over Coppin State Monday night. Rautins, the son of men's national coach and Raptors broadcaster Leo Rautins, also scored a career-high 29 points in the game. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Sports

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA



Teixeira to ... where else? Yankees

The New York Yankees, generally perceived to be on the fringes of the Mark Teixeira sweepstakes, dramatically swooped in yesterday to strike a deal for the biggest prize among position players on the free-agent market. The Yankees, who recently signed the top two starting pitchers on the market — left-hander CC Sabathia and right-hander A.J. Burnett — gave the all-star first baseman an eight-year, \$180-million US deal.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Canada's drive for five begins

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

The IIHF world junior championship begins on Boxing Day at Scotiabank Place in Ottawa. Canada, which opens against the Czech Republic at 8:30 p.m. ET, is looking to match its own record of five straight gold medals.

Team Canada's chief scout, Al Murray, sat down to offer a breakdown of the assembled roster.

FORWARDS

John Tavares of Oakville, Ont., will be Canada's go-to goal-scorer and a productive tournament will help his bid to go No. 1 overall in June's NHL draft.

The scoring line of Cody Hodgson, Zach Boychuk and Jordan Eberle has shown flashes of dominance in exhibition action. Hodgson is a Vancouver Canucks first-round pick and Eberle is an Edmonton Oilers first-round selection. Western Leaguers Brett Sonne and Jamie Benn are lesser-known forwards who know how to generate offence.

But the Canadian staff



Pat Quinn and company open up against the Czech Republic on Boxing Day.

built the team on the principle that no line will sit on the bench when a goal is needed.

"It's a balanced group, top to bottom, through all four lines," Murray said. "It wouldn't surprise me on any given day that any of the lines could be our top-scoring unit."

DEFENCE

The top pairing features

Los Angeles Kings first-rounders Colten Teubert and returnee Thomas Hickey. Hickey, a two-way force, will also serve as captain.

Alex Pietrangolo, drafted fourth overall by the St. Louis Blues this past June, and Ryan Ellis, a gifted 17-year-old, will log a pile of minutes in power-play situations. Returnee P.K. Subban, a Montreal Canadiens draft pick, and 6-foot-7 Tyler Mey-

ers will also be factors. Subban has been used as a forward, when necessary. "We have some strong defensive players on the back end who can do the job when called upon," Murray said.

GOAL

The starting issue may not be solved until after the round robin because the staff thinks highly of both Chet Pickard and Dustin

Canada's sked

- Dec. 26 vs. Czech Republic
- Dec. 28 vs. Kazakhstan
- Dec. 29 vs. Germany
- Dec. 31 vs. USA

Tokarski to rotate them.

"It's a wide open battle," said Murray. "Both are on top of their games, both have proven track records, and both have battled against each other in the WHL."

OUTLOOK

With only five returnees from last year and Tavares as the only true star, this is a team of no-names for the majority of Canadian hockey fans. There will also be plenty of pressure for the teenagers with the tournament on home ice and the intense media spotlight surrounding the drive for five.

But Murray said pressure is a something of a myth.

"There's not pressure to win so many in a row, there's pressure to win — period," Murray said.

"We come in expecting to win gold and that's an opportunity, not a daunting task."

metro life panel

Top 10 Canadian sports stories of 2008

- Canadians win three gold medals at the Summer Olympics in Beijing — wrestler Carol Huynh, equestrian Eric Lamaze and the men's eight rowing team.
- Not often does a song rank as a top story, but the memorable Hockey Night in Canada theme song is played on CBC for the last time in June and moved over to TSN.
- The first regular-season NFL game was played in Canada and was something of a flop.
- Sam Mitchell was fired as head coach of the Toronto Raptors and was replaced by assistant coach Jay Triano, who became the first Canadian head coach in NBA history.
- The Dallas Stars cut Sean Avery in December after he made lewd remarks.
- Adam van Koeverden was heavily favoured to win gold in the 1,000- and 500-metre races in men's kayaking in Beijing, but finished eighth and second, respectively.
- Led by first-year CFL coach John Hufnagel and quarterback Henry Burris, the Calgary Stampeders upset the Alouettes in November to win the Grey Cup in Montreal.
- It was an extraordinarily tough year as a bevy of CFL luminaries died, including Joe Krol, Ron Lancaster, Jake Gaudaur, Bob Ackles, Leif Pettersen, J.I. Albrecht, Ralph Sazio and Earl Lunsford.
- After months of speculation, the Toronto Maple Leafs hired ex-Vancouver Canucks GM Brian Burke as their new chief.
- The Toronto Blue Jays finished out of the playoffs again, brought back manager Cito Gaston in mid-season and said goodbye to club president Paul Godfrey.



Triano



Burris

'Tis the season for giving and forgiving

YorkReport

Marty York

marty.york@metronews.ca

spend (waste?) lots of time ripping prima-donna megazillionaires in professional sports, hot shots who somehow think their perspiration smells nicer than ours. I guess I'm a jaded sports writer.

Today, however, I'm actually feeling somewhat sorry for some of these same dudes. I guess it's the time of year.

Like, honestly, I'm finding myself hoping Michael Vick and Sean Avery and Plaxico Burress — perpetrators of loathsome acts — get second chances in the new year and rebound from adversity.

I'm hoping Todd Bertuzzi

reaches a mind-easing settlement to an issue that was created by his despicable violence but that has dragged on too long.

I'm hoping Roger Clemens and Barry Bonds somehow prove they

Here's to hoping perpetrators of loathsome acts get second chances.

didn't load up with performance-enhancing drugs and receive the bouquets we long figured were coming to them for their domination in baseball.

I hope MLB revisits its stance on Pete Rose and welcomes the hits leader into the Hall of Fame before it's too late for him to treasure it the way he should.

I hope Casey Printers is allowed to stay with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats and shows he deserves the CFL-high salary this woe-begone franchise

inexplicably gave him.

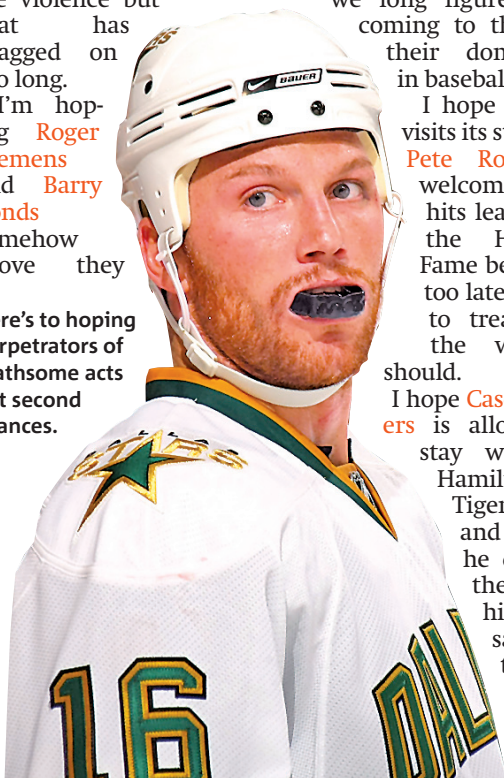
Heck, I'm in such a mood today that I actually hope Don Cherry continues to regurgitate his bafflegab on CBC and keeps on dressing like a clown.

I hope Manny Ramirez signs for the unfathomable dollars he craves and is allowed by his new manager to let his hair grow down to below the butt inside his baggy pants.

I hope Craig MacTavish survives as head coach of the Edmonton Oilers, though I seriously doubt that will happen with a struggling squad proving it has nowhere near the type of talent we reckoned it would this season.

I hope the Detroit Lions can somehow muster up enough to finally record a victory this weekend and avoid becoming the first 0-16 team in NFL history, though I seriously doubt that will happen because they are so very, very awful.

I hope Jay Triano — the



NHL Report

- Be sure to check out Marty York's latest NHL Report this afternoon, exclusively at metronews.ca/nhlreport

first Canadian head coach in NBA history and a decent chap by all accounts — can revive the Raptors, though I seriously doubt that will happen since overrated club czar Bryan Colangelo has provided him with a dog of a team (that has only two bona fide players — Chris Bosh and Jose Calderon).

I hope Maple Leafs bossman Brian Burke smiles. Just once.

I hope the Blue Jays can talk MLB into moving them to a different division.

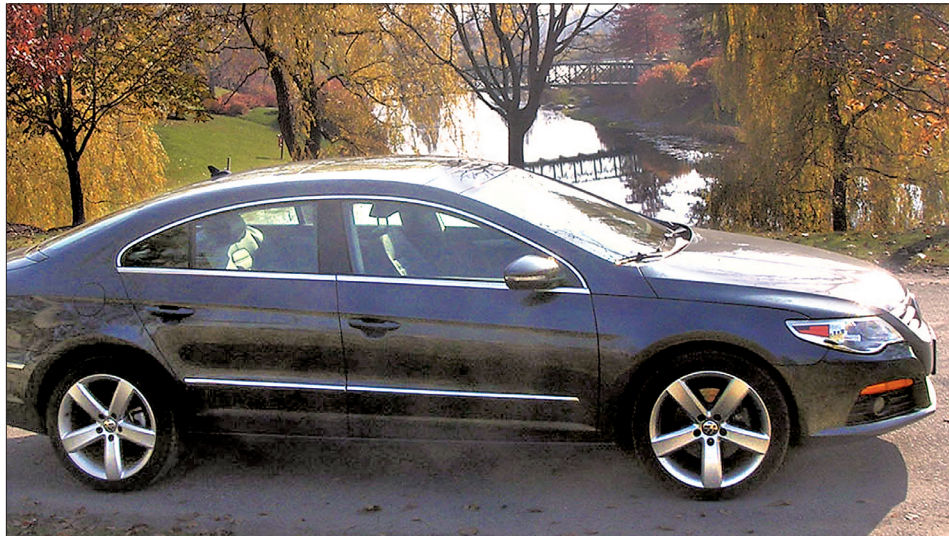
And I hope you enjoy the holidays.

Marty York has been a groundbreaking sports columnist and broadcaster in Canada for decades.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Automotive

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA



The 2009 Volkswagen Passat CC has a coupe-like look, for a four-passenger sport sedan. The Passat CC was the winner in the Automobile Journalists Association of Canada (AJAC) best new family car over \$30,000. It is now in the running for 2009 Canadian car of the year.

Hey good-looking VW Passat CC a winner all the way

LORNE DRURY
for Metro Canada

When I first saw the Volkswagen Passat CC at the Detroit auto show last January, I was impressed by its styling.

Finally, here was a Volkswagen with real pizzazz, one that stands out and makes a statement.

Not that all the other Volkswagen offerings are bland, but none are as stylish as the Passat CC — a sedan with a sweeping roof line that gives it a coupe-like look, similar to the Mercedes CLS. It's so striking it just may be the best-looking Volkswagen ever produced.

And when I had a chance to drive it for the first time at the recent Automobile Journalists Association of Canada (AJAC) Car of the Year Testfest in Niagara-on-the-Lake, I came away even more impressed.

So were the other judges. The Passat CC (the CC stands for Comfort Coupe, I'm told) was judged best new family car over \$30K for 2009.

It's available with two engine choices — a 2.0-litre four-cylinder in line turbocharged engine, producing 200 horsepower and 207 lb/ft of torque and a 3.6-litre 280-horsepower V6 with 265 lb/ft of torque.

While the Passat CC is a head-turner because of its superb exterior styling, the interior is nothing to sneeze at either.

Whether in sportline or highline trim, the cabin is

2009 VW Passat CC

Type: Four-door sedan
Price: \$31,975 to \$44,975
Engine: 2.0-litre four cylinder, inline turbocharged with intercooler and direct injection
HP: 200-280

Highlights

- AWD
- Attractive styling
- Award-winning

nicely done. The stylish dash is well thought out with all knobs, gauges and buttons easy to reach. Some observers think the dash material with its "pebbly" appearance takes away somewhat from the elegance of the design, but I really don't have a problem with it.

The use of polished aluminum and wood grain trim as interior accents adds to the appeal of the cabin and the Nappa leather seats in my test vehicle were top grade.

The sport-style driver's seat is heavily bolstered and I never really got it adjusted for a perfect fit. I suspect that was my doing rather than a design factor. Rear seat headroom was adequate and actually better than expected with the sloping coupe-style roof line, which is about 50 mm (two inches) lower than in the Passat sedan.

Legroom is also fine for rear-seat passengers, but this is truly a 2 + 2 design with buckets front and rear.

In AJAC testing, the CC produced acceleration numbers of 7.9 seconds (0-100 km/h) and 5.9 seconds (80-120 km/h) and a braking number of 43.1m (100-0 km/h).

Fuel consumption ratings for the 2.0T are 10.8L/100 km (26 mpg) city and 7.1L/100 km (40 mpg) highway, with an average of 9.1L/100 km (31 mpg).

The 2009 Passat CC breaks new ground for Volkswagen with a European-styled sport sedan that has coupe-like looks and superb handling at an affordable price.



How are potential car buyers reacting to the economy? Find out at metronews.ca/auto



Top cars of 2008

1. Honda Fit
2. Chevrolet Malibu Hybrid
3. BMW 1 Series. Coupe and convertible
4. Mazda6
5. VW Jetta SportWagon TDI
6. Dodge Challenger
7. Subaru Forrester
8. Hyundai Genesis
9. Ford Flex
10. Mitsubishi Evolution MR.

AS VOTED BY
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Last-Minute

Gift Guide

Special holiday gift guide
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SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Deck the halls with reds, whites

NATALIE MacLEAN
for Metro Canada

Still looking for a last-minute gift? Those on your list who enjoy wine are the easiest to shop for: One size fits all, you don't have to spend a bundle to get a delicious bottle and doubles are great for the cellar.

Here are my top 10 favourite wines to give as gifts, to enjoy with your holiday dinner or to treat yourself.

2008 Cono Sur Viognier, Chile (\$10.95 SRP)

Amazing wine for the price. Gor-

geously aromatic with notes of rose petals, lychee, apricot and Asian pears.

Pair with: Curries, Asian dishes, shellfish, sushi, salads and turkey.
Score: 89/100.

2006 Cookootherama Chardonnay, Darling Point, Australia (\$13.95 SRP)

A round, warm chardonnay with ripe apples, butter, vanilla and melon. Closed with a screwcap.

Pair with: Roast chicken, corn.
Score: 87/100.

2007 Gabbiano Pinot Grigio, Venezia, Italy (\$12.95 SRP)

A crisp white with mild white grapefruit and melon notes. Good acidity.

Pair with: Shellfish, salads, vegetables, quiche, goat cheese and pear salad.
Score: 86/100.

2006 Louis Jadot Chardonnay, Burgundy, France (\$20.95 SRP)

Classic Burgundian lines with mellow richness. Ripe apples, butter and smoke fill the glass. Full-bodied.

Pair with: Pasta in cream sauce, seafood risotto.
Score: 89/100.



2006 Don Mendoza Reserve Merlot, Mendoza, Argentina (\$10.50 SRP)

A lip-smacking, delicious and full-bodied red. Notes of mocha, luscious plums, black cherries and vanilla. Smooth and round. Vineyards are in the Uco Valley, which has hot days and cold nights.

Pair with: Grilled lamb, steak with mushroom sauce, pasta in a spicy tomato sauce, dark chocolate.
Score: 89/100.

2007 Wolf Blass Gold Label Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$21.95 SRP)

A vibrant, medium-bodied red with ripe cherries and plums. Silky tannins. Closed with a screwcap.

Pair with: Chinese five-spice duck with wild mushrooms, steam greens and turkey dinner.
Score: 89/100.

2006 Tinhorn Creek Vineyards Cabernet Merlot, British Columbia (\$17.99 SRP)

A lovely, rich and deeply textured cabernet merlot.

Notes of black raspberries with vanilla and smoky oak.

Pair with: Red meats, pasta with tomato sauce, strong cheeses, dark chocolate.

Drink: 2008-2012.
Score: 90/100.

2006 Perez Cruz Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon, Maipo Valley, Chile (\$13.95 SRP)

An absolutely phenomenal wine for the money! Rich, robust with black plums and comfort.

Pair with: Spicy dishes, steak, hamburgers.
Score: 90/100.

2007 Chateau Des Charmes St. David's Bench Vineyard Gamay Droif, V.Q.A., Niagara Peninsula, Ontario (\$16.95 SRP)

A peppery, robust number loaded with delicious blackberries and black plums. Great balance and smooth texture.

Pair with: Rare prime rib, beef stew, Chinese egg rolls, asparagus, dark chocolate truffles.
Score: 89/100.

2004 Cathedral Cellar Shiraz, South Africa (\$16.95 SRP)

A rich, layered red with

dark red fruit and a hulking oak wrap. Big, bulky and tasty.

Pair with: Steak, boar, roast, grilled meats.
Score: 89/100.

Natalie MacLean, author of the bestseller *Red, White and Drunk All Over*, publishes a free wine newsletter at nataliemaclean.com.

Ideas for the techie

Still looking for inspiration? Check out these ideas, along with approximate prices, from Best Buy's Kiara Barrett:

- Apple 1GB iPod Shuffle (\$49.99)
- Global Holdings 1.5" Digital Photo Frame Keychain (\$19.99)
- Hasbro Oye I-Dog, left, (\$24.95)
- Best Buy gift card

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U.S. aviation regulators are pressing airlines to voluntarily trim operations at New York's congested LaGuardia airport, after a plan to auction takeoff and landing rights at three of the city's airports was stayed by a court. LaGuardia is the most delay-prone airport in the U.S. **REUTERS**

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Skaters enjoy the American Museum of Natural History's new Polar Rink.



AMNH/D. FINNIN

Encore Las Vegas

Encore, entrepreneur Steve Wynn's new \$2.3 billion US resort and casino in Las Vegas, opened this week. Among its features is an Italian restaurant themed on the late crooner Frank Sinatra. Visit encorelasvegas.com.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

NYC's new holiday highlights

Skate at the Polar Rink, catch a Cirque show and take a tour of Brooklyn's Christmas lights

TheTravelJunkie



metronews.ca/traveljunkie

Manhattan is a magical place over the holiday season.

Twinkling white lights decorate storefronts, while horse-drawn carriages trot through a snow-dusted Central Park.

Even with a troubled economy, nothing beats Christmas in New York! With restaurants, bars, theatres and department stores packed with happy holiday-goers, you'd never know we're in a recession.

If you're planning a trip to the city, here are my top five things to do in NYC this holiday season:

Practice your high kick:

The Christmas Spectacular, starring the legendary leggy Rockettes, is an an-

nual holiday tradition at Radio City Music Hall, the largest indoor theatre in the world. While the legendary show only runs until Dec. 30, aspiring Rockette dancers can kick up their heels all year long.

The Rockette Experience is a three-hour workshop taught by a real Radio City Rockette. Wannabes can learn choreography from the Rockette's repertoire, go through a mock audition, pose with a Rockette teacher, and take the Stage Door Tour.

The program gives regular people the opportunity to train with these world famous dancers in their actual rehearsal hall. Students must be at least 10 years old, with some training in jazz, tap and ballet. For \$108, you get a Rockette dance class, a tour and a free t-shirt. radiocity.com/rockettes

Take the plunge:

If cold water and the onset of hypothermia gets your blood pumping, check out the annual

Coney Island Polar Bear Club New Year's Day Swim. At 1 p.m. on Jan. 1, hundreds of swimmers take a dip in the icy waters of the Atlantic.

Part rite of passage, part frosty philanthropy, winter bathing has been a New York City tradition since 1903. Pack your swim suit, surf boots, some warm clothes and a sense of humor for a fun day of frostbite. polarbearclub.org

Cirque:

Catch Wintuk, a Cirque du Soleil holiday production at Madison Square Gardens, which runs until Jan. 4. Wintuk "tells the touching winter tale of a boy's quest for snow in an imaginary land."

In typical Cirque style, Wintuk includes acrobatics, creatively costumed dancers, puppets and high-energy music.

This family-oriented show boasts some 50 performers, from contortionist tight-rope walkers to jugglers, balancing their technical twists and twirls.

Sharpen your skates:

While there are many iconic places in Manhattan to ice skate (including Rockefeller Center or Central Park) the Polar Rink is a sparkling new facility to cut your blades on. The American Museum of Natural History, which offers such exhibits as Sea Monsters, Climate Change and The Butterfly Conservatory, now boasts a state-of-the-art skating rink.

Visitors can sip hot chocolate, take in the Upper Westside view and glide around a 17-foot-tall polar bear. Skate rental is included in the ticket price, which is \$10 for adults, \$8 for kids and \$9 for students and seniors. amnh.org/museum/polar-rink

Light up:

For an illuminated look at New York, hop aboard a guided tour of Brooklyn's most famous (and often gaudy) Christmas lights. This three-and-a-half-hour tour takes visitors through the Italian-American



KEVIN COOLEY

Visitors can tour Brooklyn's large-scale Christmas light displays.

neighbourhood of Dyker Heights, a residential area said to have the most extravagant holiday yard decorations. A trip here promises mansions draped with lights and front yards

stacked with neon nativity scenes, animatronic toys, mechanical reindeer and 30-foot toy soldiers.

Julia Dimon is co-host of Word Travels, airing on OLN, and editor of thetraveljunkie.ca.

Entertainment

You betcha

Tina Fey was voted The Associated Press' Entertainer of the Year, an annual honour chosen by newspaper editors and broadcast producers across the country. MSN.COM

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

●●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

Movie feature

Bedtime Stories

●●

REVIEW Bedtime Stories brings Adam Sandler to Disney and the results are predictably placid. Sandler's once anarchistic comic spirit has been dulling with age and joining the Disney team feels like an appropriate crash landing for his downward trajectory. The film is far too predictably childish to appeal to the actor's core audience, coming off like one of those forgettable family comedy.

Phil Brown/Metro Canada

The Reader

●●

REVIEW On paper, The Reader sounds like a syrupy hanky fest suitable only for TV. Yet, like the that it is based on, the movie is actually

surprisingly complex examination of the holocaust. The film is about Michael Berg, who as a young man had an affair with an older woman named Hanna Schmitz. He later discover that she was a former SS guard at a concentration camp. What starts as love affair soon transforms into a meditation on the challenges post-war Germany faced in accepting the compliancy of the previous generation. Kate Winslet is exceptional as Schmitz.

Steve Gow/Metro Canada

The Spirit

●●

REVIEW The Spirit reminds me of a cartoon version of James Bond. See, in the same sense that the British spy is an indestructible crime fighter driven largely off the insatiable appetite

of women, so too is this comic book icon. In fact, replace 007's trademark martini with a glowing red tie and you might not be able to tell him apart from George Lazenby.

Steve Gow/Metro Canada

Valkyrie

●●½

REVIEW There's no doubt Valkyrie was an ambitiously high risk project for Tom Cruise, and the truth is the film will likely struggle to fill theatre seats as it focuses on the true story of an assassination attempt on German dictator Adolph Hitler. Cruise plays Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg (Cruise), a tragically injured soldier that joins an inside gang of Nazi conspirators to eliminate Hitler.

Steve Gow/Metro Canada

Button fantastical

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

Director: David Fincher

Stars: Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett

Classification: PG

Rating: ●●●●

STEVE GOW for Metro Canada

There's a lot of talk about Brad Pitt possibly sneaking an Oscar for his role in The Curious Case of Benjamin Button — he definitely gives the best performance of his career.

Based on a tale by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Button tells the life story of a man who is born with the physicality of an 80-year-old but mysteriously ages in reverse, meeting impossible challenges along the way. Button plays up the more surreal aspects of such an odd character.

While he struggles to fit in with other kids as a wrinkled youngster, salty sea dogs mistake him for an old codger and escort Button to brothels, hire him to work the high seas and open his eyes to a world normally reserved for jaded adults.

Director David Fincher (Zodiac) captures the more fantastical elements of the movie including a hilarious recurring storyline about a guy who keeps getting struck by lightning.

Ultimately, it's that culmination of bizarre subplots and side stories that distract from the emotional core and stretch Button out to a weighty sitting length. At 166 minutes, the real curious case of Benjamin Button is whether you can get to the end without a bathroom break.

metro life panel

Top 2008 actors

1. Heath Ledger (The Dark Knight)

2. Meryl Streep (Doubt)

3. Angelina Jolie (Changeling)

4. Sean Penn (Milk)

5. Brad Pitt (The Curious Case of Benjamin Button)

Top 2008 movies

1. The Dark Knight

2. Wall-E

3. The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

4. Slumdog Millionaire

5. Frost/Nixon

SOURCE: AS VOTED BY METRO LIFE PANEL MEMBERS

"THE PERFECT FAMILY FILM!"

Mark S. Allen, CBS/CW TV

"YOU'LL LAUGH, YOU'LL CRY, YOU'LL FALL IN LOVE WITH MARLEY!"

Jake Hamilton, KHOU-TV (CBS), Houston

"THE MOST LOVEABLE MOVIE THIS SEASON."

Mark S. Allen, CBS/CW TV

"WONDERFUL! PAWS-ITIVELY PERFECT!"

Kara Mack, KPTV-TV, Portland

"GREAT! PACKS AN EMOTIONAL PUNCH."

Kevin Steinross, KTVI-TV, St. Louis



Owen Wilson Jennifer Aniston

Marley & Me

FOX 2000 PICTURES AND REGENCY ENTERPRISES PRESENT A GIL NETTER/SUNSWEEP ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION A DAVID FRANKEL FILM

OWEN WILSON JENNIFER ANISTON "MARLEY & ME" ERIC DANE AND ALAN ARKIN COSTUME DESIGNER CINDY EVANS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JULIA MICHELS MUSIC BY THEODORE SHAPIRO

EDITED BY MARK LIVOLSI A.C.E. PRODUCTION DESIGNER STUART WURTZEL DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY FLORIAN BALLHAUS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ARNON MILCHAN JOE CARACCILO, JR.

PRODUCED BY KAREN ROSENFELT GIL NETTER PRODUCED BY JOHN GROGAN SCREENPLAY BY SCOTT FRANK AND DON ROOS DIRECTED BY DAVID FRANKEL

PG

www.marleyandmemovie.com

STARTS TOMORROW!

Check directory or log onto www.cineplex.com, www.empiretheatres.com, www.rainbowcinemas.ca, www.tribute.ca for locations and showtimes

4 GOLDEN GLOBE AWARD NOMINATIONS

BEST PICTURE OF THE YEAR

BEST DIRECTOR STEPHEN DALDRY

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS KATE WINSLET

BEST SCREENPLAY DAVID HARE

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SANDY KENYON, WABC-TV • PHOENIX FILM CRITICS SOCIETY • TODD HILL, NEWHOUSE SYNDICATE • REBECCA MURRAY, ABOUT.COM • JOANNA LANGFELD, THEMOVIEMINUTE.COM

—NEW YORK OBSERVER, Rex Reed

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I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE IT AGAIN!



KATE WINSLET RALPH FIENNES

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www.TheReader-Movie.com

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Screen Times

New releases are highlighted in pink.

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM WED., DEC. 24 TO THURS., DEC. 25. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

CITY CENTRE 9 CINEMAS 10200 102nd Ave., 780-421-7020 Australia (PG) DTS Digital Wed 12:30-3:50-7:10 Bedtime Stories (G) No Passes, Digital Presentation Thu 3:05-7:35 Bolt in Disney Digital 3D (G) Digital Presentation Wed 1:15-3:35-7 The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital Thu 3:40-8 The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) DTS Digital, No Passes Wed 12:55-3:30-6:50 DTS Digital Thu 3-6:35-9 Doubt (STC) DTS Digital Thu 3:10-6:55-9:20 Four Christmases (PG) DTS Digital Wed 12:45-3:25-6:55 Quantum of Solace (14A) DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 12:40-3:15-6:35 The Reader (18A) DTS Digital Thu 3:15-6:30-9:10 Seven Pounds (14A) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes Wed 1-3:55-6:40 No Passes, DTS Digital Thu 3:50-6:45-9:55 The Tale of Despereaux (G) Stadium Seating, DTS Digital Thu 3:30-7:10-9:30 Twilight (PG) DTS Digital Wed 12:35-3:20-6:30 Valkyrie (PG) DTS Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 3:35-6:40-9:40 Yes Man (PG) No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital Wed 1:10-3:40-6:45 No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital Thu 3:20-7:10-9:50 CLAREVIEW 10 CINEMAS 4211 139th Ave., 780-472-7600 Bedtime Stories (G) Digital Presentation, No Passes Thu 4:25-7-9:30	Bolt in Disney Digital 3D (G) Digital Presentation Wed 2:10-4:40-7 The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) No Passes Thu 4:50-8:30 The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) Wed 1:10-4:50-7:05 Thu 5-7:25-9:50 Four Christmases (PG) Wed 1:25-4:30-6:50 Thu 4:30-9:15 Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Wed 2-4:15-6:35 Marley & Me (PG) No Passes Thu 4:10-6:50-9:35 Quantum of Solace (14A) Wed 1:35-4:25-6:55 Seven Pounds (14A) No Passes Wed 1-3:50-6:45 No Passes Thu 4-6:40-9:25 The Spirit (14A) Thu 4:40-7:15-9:40 The Tale of Despereaux (G) Wed 1:20-4:20-6:40 Thu 4:20-6:45-9 Transporter 3 (14A) Wed 1:50-4:45-7 Twilight (PG) Wed 1:30-4:10-6:50 Thu 6:30 Valkyrie (PG) Thu 3:50-6:35-9:20 Yes Man (PG) No Passes Wed 1:40-4:35-7:05 No Passes Thu 4:35-7:10-9:45 MOVIES 12 5074 130 Ave., 780-472-9779 Appaloosa (14A) Wed 6:45 Beverly Hills Chihuahua (G) Wed 1:20-2-4-4:45-6:40-7:25 Thu 4-4:45-6:40-7:20-9:10-9:50 Body of Lies (14A) Wed 1:20-4:10-6:55 Thu 4:10-6:55-9:35 Burn After Reading (14A) Wed 1:45-4:40-7:15 Changeling (14A) Wed 1:05-4:05-6:55 Thu 4:05-6:55-9:50 The Dark Knight (PG) Wed 1:10-4:20-7:40 Thu 4:20-7:40	Eagle Eye (14A) Wed 1:35-4:25-7 Thu 4:25-7-9:45 Ghajini (Hindi w/e.s.t.) (STC) Thu 4:35-8:15 High School Musical 3: Senior Year (G) Thu 4:05-4:50-6:45-7:25-9:15-9:55 Igor (PG) Wed 1:50-4:35 Lakeview Terrace (14A) Wed 7:20 Mamma Mia! Wed 1:40-4:15-7:05 Thu 4:15-7:05-9:35 Max Payne (14A) Wed 1:55-4:40-7:20 Thu 4:40-7:10-9:40 Passchendaele (14A) Wed 1:15-4:10-6:50 Thu 4:30-6:50-9:25 WALL-E (G) Wed 1:30-4:30 NORTH EDMONTON 14231 137th Ave., 780-732-2236 Australia (PG) Wed 2:10-6:20 Bedtime Stories (G) No Passes Thu 5:30-7:50-10:30 Bolt (G) Wed 12-1:10-2:30-3:40-4:45-7:15 Thu 4:45-7:15-9:40 The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) No Passes Thu 4:20-8:30 The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Wed 12:15-1:30-2:40-4-5:10-6:40-7:50 No Passes Thu 3:40-6:40-9:20 Doubt (STC) Thu 3:30-6:30-9 Four Christmases (PG) Wed 12:40-3-5:20-7:45 Thu 5:20-7:45-10:10 Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Wed 12:30-2-50-5:05-7:20 Marley & Me (PG) No Passes Thu 4-7:20-10:05 Quantum of Solace (14A) Wed 1:40-4:30-6:30-7:30 Thu 4:30-7:10-9:50 Role Models (14A) Wed 1:50-4:50-7:25 Seven Pounds (14A) No Passes Wed 1:20-4:10-7:10 No Passes Thu 4:10-7:05-10	The Spirit (14A) Thu 5-8-10:40 The Tale of Despereaux (G) No Passes Wed 12:10-2:20-4:35-7 No Passes Thu 4:35-7-9:10 Transporter 3 (14A) Wed 2-5:30-8 Twilight (PG) Wed 1-3:50-6:50 Thu 3:50-6:50-9:30 Valkyrie (PG) Thu 4:40-7:30-10:15 Yes Man (PG) No Passes Wed 12:20-2:45-5:15-7:40 No Passes Thu 5:15-7:40-10:20 SCOTIABANK THEATRE WEST MALL 8882 170th St., 780-444-2400 Australia (PG) Wed 2-6:30 Bedtime Stories (G) No Passes Thu 4:50-7:30-10:10 Bolt (G) Wed 12:45-3:45-6:45 Thu 3:45-6:45-9:20 The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) No Passes Thu 4-8 The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Wed 2-5-7:45 The Day the Earth Stood Still: The IMAX Experience (PG) No Passes Wed 1-4-7 No Passes Thu 4-7-9:45 Four Christmases (PG) Wed 1:30-4:15-6:40 Thu 4:15-6:40-9:15 Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Wed 12:30-3:30-6:30 Marley & Me (PG) No Passes Thu 3:30-6:30-9:30 Quantum of Solace (14A) Wed 1:40-4:30-7:30 Thu 4:30-7:40-10:30 Role Models (14A) Wed 1:20-4:20-7:20 Seven Pounds (14A) No Passes Wed 12:50-3:50-6:50 No Passes Thu 3:50-6:50-9:50	The Spirit (14A) Thu 4:25-7:20-10:20 The Tale of Despereaux (G) No Passes Wed 11:50-2:15-4:40-7:15 No Passes Thu 4:40-7:15-9:40 Transporter 3 (14A) Wed 1:10-4:10-7:10 Twilight (PG) Wed 12:40-3:40-6:45 Thu 3:40-6:45-9:45 Valkyrie (PG) Thu 4:10-7:10-10 Yes Man (PG) No Passes Wed 12:10-2:45-5:20-7:50 No Passes Thu 5:20-7:50-10:30 SOUTH EDMONTON COMMON 1525 99th St., 780-436-8585 Australia (PG) Wed 2-6:30 Bedtime Stories (G) No Passes Thu 12-30-5-7:30-10 Bolt (G) Wed 12:10-1:30-2:30-4-4:50-7:20 Thu 12:10-2:30-4:50-7:20-9:40 The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) No Passes Thu 12:15-4-8 The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) No Passes Wed 12-12:30-3:10-3:30-6:40-7:30 No Passes Thu 12:30-3:30-7:30-10:30 Doubt (STC) Thu 1:40-4:15-6:50-9:45 Four Christmases (PG) Wed 12:10-2:40-5-7:20 Thu 12:10-2:40-5-7:15-9:50 Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Wed 11:50-2:20-4:30-6:45 Marley & Me (PG) No Passes Thu 1:15-4:15-7:40-10:30 Milk (14A) Wed 12:40-3:45-6:50 Thu 12:40-3:45-6:40-9:50 Punisher: War Zone (18A) Wed 7:10 Quantum of Solace (14A) Wed 1-3:50-7 Thu 1-3:50-6:45-9:40 Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi (Hindi w/e.s.t.) (PG) Wed 12:15-4 Thu 12:15-4-8	Role Models (14A) Wed 1:45-4:15-6:45 Seven Pounds No Passes Wed 1-20-4:10-7 No Passes Thu 1:20-4:10-7-10:10 The Spirit (14A) Thu 1:30-4-7:40-10:30 The Tale of Despereaux (G) No Passes Wed 12-2:20-4:45-7:10 No Passes Thu 12-2:20-4:45-7:10-9:30 Transporter 3 (14A) Wed 1:10-4:20-7:15 Twilight (PG) Wed 1:15-4:40-7:30 Thu 1:15-4:40-7:20-10:20 Valkyrie (PG) Thu 12:20-3:10-6:50-9:45 Yes Man (PG) No Passes Wed 12:50-3:20-7:15-10:20 TELUS WORLD OF SCIENCE Edmonton Space And Science Centre, 1121-142 St., 780-451-3344 Grand Canyon Adventure: River at Risk (STC) Thu 1-3-5 The IMAX Nutcracker (STC) Thu 12 Mummies: Secrets of the Pharaohs (STC) Thu 2 WESTMOUNT CENTRE 111 Ave. & Groat Rd., 403-455-8726 The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) DTS Digital Wed 1:15-3:40 Four Christmases (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital Wed 12:55-3:10 Marley & Me (PG) DTS Digital, No Passes Thu 6:55-9:45 Quantum of Solace (14A) DTS Digital Wed 1:05-3:30 The Spirit (14A) DTS Digital Thu 7:15-9:55 Valkyrie (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital Thu 6:40-9:20 Yes Man (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes Wed 12:45-3:20 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes Thu 7:05-9:35
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5 GOLDEN GLOBE® NOMINATIONS

BEST PICTURE (Drama)

BEST DIRECTOR
David Fincher

BEST ACTOR (Drama)
Brad Pitt

BEST SCREENPLAY
Screen Story by Eric Roth and Robin Swicord
Screenplay by Eric Roth

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE
Alexandre Desplat

TIME

“A SPRAWLING, ENTHRALLING MOVIE.
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At once familiar and like nothing ever seen on screen before. The chemistry between Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett is nothing short of glorious.”
— Karen Durbin

Newsweek

“BRAD PITT GIVES ONE OF THE SUBTLEST, MOST TOUCHING PERFORMANCES OF HIS CAREER.
Lyrical, original, deeply felt.”
— David Aisen

BRAD PITT

CATE BLANCHETT

The Curious Case Of BENJAMIN BUTTON

PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND WARNER BROS. PICTURES PRESENT A KENNEDY/MARSHALL PRODUCTION A DAVID FINCHER FILM BRAD PITT CATE BLANCHETT "THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON" TARAJI P. HENSON JULIA ORLANDO JASON FLEMING ELIAS KOTIAS AND TILDA SWINTON MUSIC BY ALEXANDRE DESPLAT COSTUME DESIGNER KIRK BAXTER ANGUS WALL PRODUCTION DESIGNER KATHLEEN KENNEDY FRANK MARSHALL CEA CHAFFIN

WARNER BROS. PICTURES THE KENNEDY/MARSHALL COMPANY PG COARSE LANGUAGE, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN benjaminbutton.com FROM THE SCREENPLAY BY SCOTT FITZGERALD SCREENPLAY BY ERIC ROTH AND ROBIN SWICORD STORY BY E. SCOTT FITZGERALD SOUNDTRACK ALBUM ON CONCORD RECORDS

IN THEATRES EVERYWHERE CHRISTMAS DAY

CHECK THEATRE DIRECTORIES FOR LOCATIONS AND SHOWTIMES

Britney's dad gets a raise

Britney Spears's father, Jamie Spears, just got a salary increase, to about \$75 an hour. On Monday, a Los Angeles Superior Court Commissioner boosted his payment for acting as his daughter's conservator by an additional \$51,000. **PEOPLE.COM**

entertainment **17**Metro's **2008**

Top 2008 TV shows

1. So You Think You Can Dance (Canada)
2. Dexter
3. So You Think You Can Dance (U.S.)
4. Mad Men
5. Battlestar Galactica
6. Gene Simmons' Family Jewels
7. South Park
8. Entourage
 - 9. Kenny Vs. Spenny
 - 10. Metalocalypse

Top cooking shows

1. Jamie at Home with Jamie Oliver
2. Iron Chef America
3. The F Word with Gordon Ramsay
4. Restaurant Makeover
5. Nigella Feasts with Nigella Lawson



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GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt



Kenya talks to singer Fergie
about make up, exclusively at
metronews.ca/globalstyle

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 All through the history the great religions have spoken to the return of a future Teacher. The Christians hope for the return of the Christ, the Buddhists look for the coming of a new Buddha, while the Muslims await the Imam Madhi, the Hindus a reincarnation of Krishna and the Jews the Messiah. How will we know Him? Surely He will ring our hearts with a message of sharing, justice and brotherhood. How can we prepare the way for Him? Each day brings opportunities, large and small, to act in favor of unity and justice. Our willingness to share will make a real difference in our world.

www.shareintl.org

Top cookbooks

1. The Complete Canadian Living Baking Book, by Elizabeth Baird and The Canadian Living Test Kitchen
2. Just 5 Things: Easy Gourmet Cooking with just a Handful of Ingredients, by Rachel Lane
3. David Rocco's Dolce Vita, by David Rocco
4. In the Kitchen with Anna: New Ways with the Classics, by Anna Olson
5. Friday Night Dinners, by Bonnie Stern

Top health stories

1. Foods that help fight the flu
2. Eat more antioxidants to fight illness
3. People connect more through technology than in-person
4. Fast eaters are more likely to be obese
5. Tooth decay can be transmitted

Top 2008 TV actors

1. Michael C. Hall (Dexter)
 2. Jeremy Piven (Entourage)
 3. Kat DeLley (So You Think You Can Dance Hall U.S.)
 4. Shannon Tweed (Gene Simmons Family Jewels)
 5. Michael Hogan (Battlestar Galactica)
- 
- A black and white portrait of actor Michael C. Hall, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He has short, wavy brown hair and is wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt and a patterned tie. The background is dark and out of focus.



Top designers

1. Anna Kosturova
2. Kimberley Newport-Mimran (Pink Tartan label)
3. Philippe Dubuc
4. David Dixon
5. Denis Gagnon

Top eco-products

1. Reusable shopping bag
2. Buying local grown food
3. Taking transit
4. Compact florescent lights
5. Reusable water bottle

Top 2008 albums

1. Coldplay, *Viva la Vida or Death And All His Friends*
2. Bob Dylan, *Tell Tale Signs — The Bootleg Series, Vol. 6*
3. Metallica, *Death Magnetic*
4. Lil Wayne, *Tha Carter III*
5. Kathleen Edwards, *Asking For Flowers*

Top books

1. The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream, by Barack Obama
2. The Tales of Beedle the Bard, by J. K. Rowling
3. Remember Me?, by Sophie Kinsella
4. Breaking Dawn, by Stephenie Meyer
5. The Last Lecture, by Randy Pausch

Top musicians

1. Coldplay
2. Kanye West
3. AC/DC
4. Jonas Brothers
5. Guns N' Roses

**SOURCE: AS VOTED BY METRO
LIFE PANEL MEMBERS**

ID	C	B	S	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	
12/24/08	2	CFRN	239 318	Corner Gas	Hollywood	Rita MacNeil's Christmas		A Christmas Carol ★★★ (1951, Fantasy) Alastair Sim.				News (N)	
	3	KHQ	- 370	News (N)	Be-Millionaire	Jeopardy! (N)		Wheel-Fortune		It's a Wonderful Life **** (1946, Comedy-Drama) James Stewart.			
	4	CBXT	- 307	It's a Wonderful Life **** (1946, Comedy-Drama)		James Stewart, Donna Reed.		CBC News: The National			The Hour		
	6	KREM	- 372	News (N)	Hollywood	The Doctors (PA)		Old Christine	Gary Unmarr	Criminal Minds (HDTV)		CSI: NY	
	7	CKEM	241 347	Law & Order: SVU		Murdoch Mysteries		Murdoch Mysteries		Little Spirit: Christmas		Your City	
	8	CITV	240 339	ET Canada	Entertainment	Bones (HDTV PA)		Bones (HDTV PA)		Painkiller Jane		Bethlehem	
	11	OMNI	-	Voice of Courage		Masoom		Hong Kong Express		Chinese Rest.	Chinese Rest.	Christmas	
	12	CBXFT	119 705	Antarctique	Voyage au pays imaginaire *** (2004, Drame) (SC)				Louez un mari		Le Téléjournal (N) (SC)		Messe
	13	KXLY	- 371	4 News at 6	4 News at 6:30	Entertainment	The Insider (N)		The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)				
	16	KAYU	- 373	The Simpsons	Raymond	Two/Half Men		Two-Half Men		Bones (HDTV PA)		Bones (HDTV PA)	News (N)
pruntime	19	CHTV	-	Tube Tales	TV Made, Do It	Inside Hollywood		To Be Fat Like Me (2007, Docudrama) Kaley Cuoco.				What Happen?	
	22	KSPS	- 374	NewsHour With Jim Lehrer		Cricket on the Hearth		Christmas-Mormon Choir		Celtic Woman-Greatest		Christmas-Luth	
	24	WTVS	- 364	Happy Holidays		Faith Hill, Joy to the World		Keeping Up		Being Served		Three Tenors Christmas	
	15	CBCN	502 -	CBC News: The National		Queen Elizabeth: Reign		CBC News: The National		CBC News: The National		Queen: Reign	
	21	TWN	505 398	(5) EarthWatch One		EarthWatch One		EarthWatch Two					
	27	CNN	500 500	Larry King Live		CNN Presents "After Jesus: The First Christians"				Larry King Live		CNN Presents	
	54	CTVN	501 391	CTV Newsnet		News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News	
	70	BNN	504 508	Squeeze Play		Market Call		Headline	Market Call	Commodities	Business News	Squeeze Play	
	20	TSN	400 400	(6) College Football Sheraton Hawaii Bowl -- Hawaii vs. Notre Dame.				SportsCentre		NFL Films	Madden Nation	Poker	
	23	net	408 418	Sportsnet Connected (HDTV)		Connected Reflections (HDTV)		Best Damn Sports Show		Connected Reflections (HDTV)		Sportsnet Con.	
sports	47	SPEED	417 406	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks (HDTV)	Pinks (HDTV)	
	94	SCORE	410 403	08 Wrap	NFL Films on the	Score	Court Surfing	Footy Show	Best of Score	Top 50 Plays of the Year			
	9	EDACC	267 351	Help TV		Stargate Atlantis (DVS)		Home for the Holidays (2005, Drama)		Sean Young.		Help TV	
	14	YTV	552 543	The Nutcracker		Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town		He-Man, She-Ra Christmas		Weird Years	Martin Mystery	Martin Mystery	
	17	TREE	553 546	Fourth King	Backyardigans	Comfy Couch	Sec Star-Left	Daniel Cook	Babar	Backyardigans	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	
	42	TOON	555 545	(6:30) Jack Frost ** (1998, Fantasy)		Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show		Looney Tunes Christmas		Futurama		The Critic	
	45	FAM	557 541	Zoeys 101	Life Derek	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han, Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	
	-	TVA	121 714	TVA 18 heures	Les Gags	Km/h (N) (SC)	Poule-oeufs or	Le Grincheux ** (2000, Fantastique)		Jim Carrey.		TVA 22 heures	
	18	CMT	575 583	Home Improve.	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Paul Brandt's Christmas		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	
	25	A&E	615 520	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Bounty Hunter	
family	26	MMM	571 581	Fabulous Life Of...		All-Time Top 10 AC/DC.		Fabulous Life Of... (N)		Party of Five "Go Away"		All-Time 10	
	29	FOOD	603 561	Iron Chef America		Iron Chef America		Iron Chef America		Iron Chef America		Iron Chef Am.	
	31	SHOW	617 522	EastEnders	Saxondale	The Man Who Saved Christmas (2002, Docudrama), Ed Asner		Trailer Park Boys Christmas				Say Goodnight	
	32	DISC	520 505	Monster Moves		Monster Moves		Monster Moves		Monster Moves		Monster Moves	
	33	SLICE	601 562	Real Housewives of OC		Filthy Rich: Cattle Drive		ET Canada	Matchmaker	Real Housewives of OC		Trading Sp	
	34	W	602 567	All She Wants for Christmas		Friends	Will & Grace	Shopping Bags	Shopping Bags	Borrowed Hearts (1997, Drama) Roma Downey.			
	35	TLC	521 560	17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	17 Kids and Counting		17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	
	36	BRAVO	620 523	Wingfield	Cmas Music	Christmas at the Concert Hall		Law & Order "Return"		Without a Trace		The Cable Guy	
	38	SPIKE	628 584	Pros vs. Joes		Pros vs. Joes		I Bet You Will	MANswers	MANswers	MANswers	MANswers	
	40	HIST	522 506	In Search of Santa Claus		NCIS "Head Case"		Crime Stories		Cities of the Underworld		Dig for Truth	
cable variety	41	COM	626 547	Colbert Christmas: Gift		Jeff Dunham's Very Special Christmas Special				The Simpsons		Dennis Leary	
	43	SPACE	627 528	Star Trek: The Motion Picture ** (1979, Science Fiction)						(9:45) Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan *** (1982)			
	44	WPCH	294 650	Nightmre Blore	Seinfeld	Family Guy	Family Guy	The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993)		Movie			
	46	OLN	411 457	Mantracker		Bounty Hunter		Survorman		Mantracker		Bounty Hunter	
	48	TROP	619 525	Married... With	Frasier	Frasier	Raymond	Raymond	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	'70s Show	The Nanny	
	50	STAR	621 527	Relative Madness		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ	Pink: etalk	The View (HDTV)		Fashionista	
	52	HGTV	600 564	Holiday Windows 2008		Design Inc. Holiday		Holmes on Homes		My Parents' House: Holidays		TBA	
	65	TLN	700 800	Andrea Bocelli	Música Italiana	Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez	George Lopez	The Sopranos (SS)		David Rocco	
	92	APTN	269 350	Canadian Geographic		APTN National News: Contact		Luna: Spirit of the Whale (2007, Docudrama) Adam Beach.		133 Skyway			
	93	VISION	261 394	A Christmas Carol ** (1984, Fantasy)		George C. Scott.		Charlotte Church		Midnight Mass From Rome			
100	MTV	581 566	Exiled "Inside the Exile"		Exiled		MTV Live		After	Next	Mom & Dad	Exiled	
101	MM	570 580	The O.C.		The O.C.		Video on Trial		Video on Trial	MuchTopRock 2008		MuchOnDem	
102	CPAC	512 396	(6:30) Headline Politics				Revue	Question Period		Prime.-Politics		Headline Politics	
103	VIVA	526 507	The West Wing		Mediums		Psychic Detect	Mediums	Encounters	Judging Amy		Commander	
106	RDI	126 730	Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct		Le Journal RDI	Le Téléjournal (SC)		La Messe de Noël au Vatican			

critics' corner—

Borrowed Hearts

A businessman (Eric McCormack) needs to pretend he's a family man to impress a potential client, so he asks an employee (Downey) and her daughter to pose as his wife and kid. Dude, if this guy is so narrow-minded as to discriminate against single people, you don't need his business. And sorry, the "Pretty Woman" ending doesn't make up for that plot point. 10 PM on W



It's a Wonderful Life

Yes, it was just on. But now that this 1946 holiday classic isn't being screened around the clock anymore, it doesn't hurt to give folks a couple of chances to watch it — especially on Christmas Eve. James Stewart is unforgettable as the financially ruined family man who wants to end it all ... until an apprentice angel (Henry Travers) shows him how much worse off the world would be without him. Donna Reed and Lionel Barrymore also star. 7 PM on CBXT



Britney Spears has reportedly parted ways with her long-term choreographers. The singer has worked with Wade Robson and Andre Fuentes since 1999 and 1998, respectively. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Celebrity Buzz

Hudson vows to stay a single girl

PEOPLE Kate Hudson informed the January issue of *In Style* that she's "made a conscious decision to try to stay single as long as possible," msn.com reports.

Still, it's suspected she's back with ex Owen Wilson, a mole maintains. "They've been quietly seeing each other and hooking up ... But I don't see it being a monogamous thing yet."

Hudson has said she does not believe people were meant to be monogamous.



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Klum and Seal a pair of lovebirds

RELATIONSHIP Heidi Klum and Seal attended an intimate dinner party at West Hollywood's Chateau Marmont earlier this week, people.com reports. The couple sat on the hotel's patio, and acted "very cozy with each other," an onlooker says.

The pair sat at the table with five friends and laughed and chatted for hours. Klum sipped wine with one hand, while keeping the other firmly on Seal's knee. Every once in a while, Seal would lean over and kiss his wife on the cheek. Says the onlooker: "It was very sweet." **METRO NEWS SERVICES**



Domestic Jessica wants a baby

PEOPLE Jessica Simpson is "actively trying" for a baby, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The singer is reportedly desperate to start a family with her American football star boyfriend Tony Romo after her younger sister Ashlee gave birth to her first child, son Bronx Mowgli, last month.

A source told gossip blogger Perez Hilton: "I wouldn't be surprised if Jessica makes an announcement that she's pregnant very, very soon."



Meanwhile, the singer has revealed that the festive period has domesticated her.

She said: "My personality is now more stay-at-home — right now I'm doing the Christmas tree and everything."

"Believe it or not, I like to bake pies. Tony's favourite is pumpkin pie and I haven't mastered that yet. Maybe I'm more of a baker — I like to make cakes, more fattening."

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Ritchie rebuffs rebound rumours

DATING Guy Ritchie is not dating Jemima Khan, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The RocknRolla director sparked rumours he was in a relationship with Jemima after the pair were seen attending a series of parties together over the last month, but it has now been claimed they are simply friends.

A source close to Guy said: "It's not romantic, they are both with the same PR company and the two times they have been together recently were at work events. They have always got along well and have known

each other for years."

However, pals are still hoping their friendship might develop into romance: "Could they date in the future? I don't know. In the past they have only seen each other when they have been in relationships, so the thought of being romantic or dating has never had the opportunity to arise."

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Jackson in fine health: Doctor

PEOPLE Michael Jackson's representative has denied the singer is suffering from a potentially deadly genetic disease, insisting he is in "fine health," femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The 50-year-old singer's spokesman Dr. Tohme Tohme has dismissed claims made by biographer Ian Halperin that the Thriller star is close to death because he is battling inherited condition A1AD (alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency) which leaves sufferers without a protein needed to protect the lungs.

Tohme in-

sists Michael is in such good health he is even planning a world tour and several TV appearances for 2009.

The representative said: "The wild allegations concerning Mr. Jackson's health are a total fabrication. Concerning this author's allegations, we would hope in the future that legitimate media will not continue to be exploited by such an obvious attempt to promote this unauthorized 'biography.'" **METRO NEWS SERVICES**



Pete dishes on breast milk and parenthood

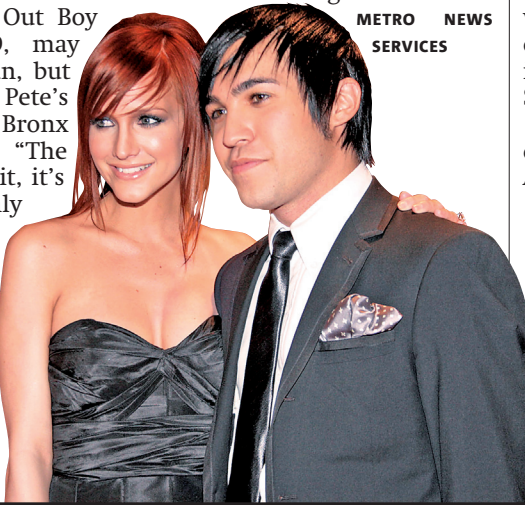
FAMILY Pete Wentz revealed that wife Ashlee Simpson's breast milk tastes "sour" and "weird" on SIRIUS' The Morning Mash Up! on Monday, usweekly.com reports.

The Fall Out Boy bassist, 29, may not be a fan, but Ashlee and Pete's newborn Bronx Mowgli is: "The baby loves it, it's the only thing he's had a chance to have."

Wentz went on to reveal that Ashlee isn't the only

Wentz to put on some pregnancy weight: "I gained 10 pounds at least. I usually hang out around 135, 134, I go up to about 140, and when I hit 148, I get fat face."

METRO NEWS
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Complicated holiday affair for Moss household

PEOPLE Kate Moss has angered partner Jamie Hince by inviting her ex-boyfriend to spend Christmas with her, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The supermodel is keen to spend time with Jefferson Hack over the festive season for the sake of their six-year-old daughter Lila Grace, but Jamie is said to be furious.

This means inviting both Lila's dad, Jefferson, and her boyfriend to her home — no matter what the consequences, Kate has also invited Jefferson's girlfriend Anouck Lepere to spend the day with them, and is determined to make it as special as possible for Lila.

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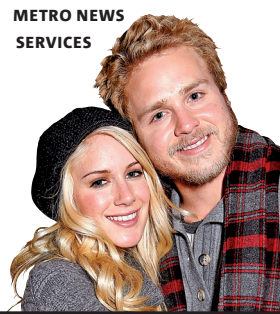
Heidi and Spencer talk kids, in-laws

PEOPLE Newlyweds Heidi Montag and Spencer Pratt told all to Ryan Seacrest on his radio show, msn.com is reporting.

When asked whether Heidi's mom disapproves of Heidi's marriage with Spencer, the starlet said her mother's comments were "kinda taken out of context. She was more joking around. She loves Spencer."

And on having kids: "We definitely need a kid, ASAP," Spencer said.

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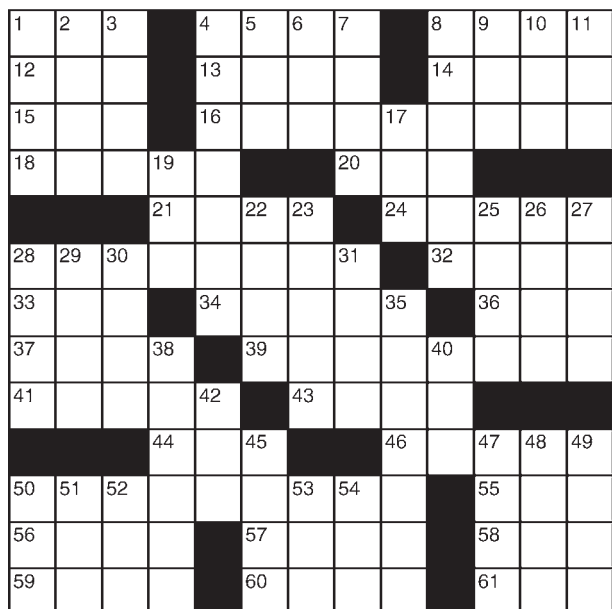
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**Today**Partly cloudy
-17°C / -27°C**Thursday**Partly cloudy
-16°C / -26°C**Friday**Mostly cloudy
-18°C / -26°C

Michele McDougall, Weather Specialist & Host – Breakfast Television
 “My favorite part is reporting the weather. It fascinates me, and as we know around here, it’s always changing, keeping forecasters on their toes.” **WEEKDAYS AT 6 A.M.**

Take Five**Crossword across**

1 Type squares
 4 Spring
 8 Saharan
 12 Sweet potato
 13 Aware of
 14 — contendere
 15 Id counterpart
 16 Dime portrait
 18 Not limp
 20 Tackle moguls
 21 Exploding star
 24 Nudge
 28 Midwestern farmland
 32 Rescue
 33 Wanted-poster letters
 34 Ann —, Mich.

36 — -relief
 37 Vivacity, in music
 39 Deli lunch order
 41 Taco topping
 43 Apportion
 44 Expert
 46 Battery terminal
 50 Sincere
 55 Exclude
 56 Anger
 57 Dog bane
 58 “— Impossible”
 59 Remain
 60 Revue segment
 61 Make lace

Crossword down

1 Watchful one
 2 Creche trio
 3 Urban pall
 4 City in Argentina
 5 Lennon’s lady
 6 Judge Lance
 7 Privation
 8 Blacksmiths’ blocks
 9 Caviar essence
 10 Not up to par
 11 Morse “E”
 17 — out a living
 19 Hostel
 22 Perp. to hor.
 23 Photo book
 25 Infant
 26 Ellipse
 27 TV Batman portrayer

28 City fleet
 29 Gumbo base
 30 Form of transportation
 31 Colour quality
 35 Drumming noise
 38 Fish-eating hawk
 40 Chaps
 42 Illustrations
 45 Slays, “Sopranos” style
 47 Last write-up
 48 Computer fodder
 49 Formerly, formerly
 50 Storefront sign abbr.
 51 Chow down
 52 — Khan
 53 Wapiti
 54 Wahine’s garland

PREVIOUS DAY’S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

2	1	6	9	4	5	3	8	7
5	8	4	1	7	3	6	2	9
3	7	9	2	8	6	1	5	4
1	5	2	7	9	8	4	6	3
9	6	7	5	3	4	8	1	2
8	4	3	6	1	2	9	7	5
7	9	5	3	6	1	2	4	8
4	2	1	8	5	9	7	3	6
6	3	8	4	2	7	5	9	1

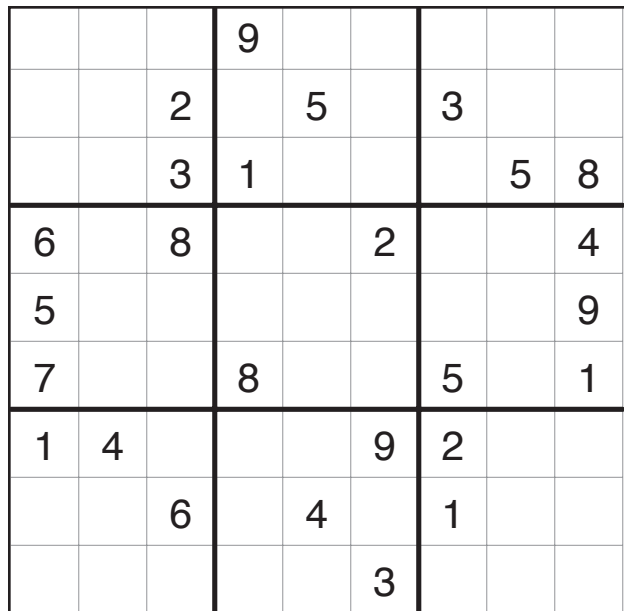
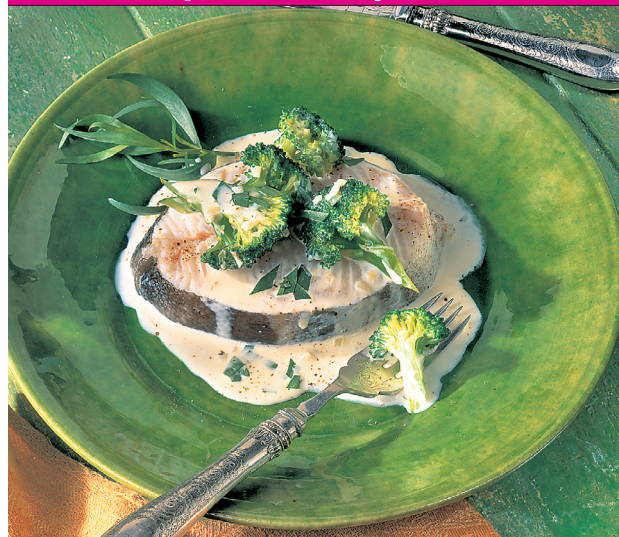
Find today’s answers + play more games at metronews.ca**SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:**

Under 13 min Genius
 13-17 min Scholar

17-21 min Smart
 21-25 min Not bad
 25+ min Keep practising

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

**Metro Recipe of the Day****Cod steaks with creamy broccoli****INGREDIENTS:**

4 fresh cod steaks, about 6 oz (170 g) each
 2 tbsp (25 mL) extra virgin olive oil
 Salt and black pepper
 1 shallot
 3/4 lb (335 g) broccoli florets
 10 sprigs of fresh tarragon
 3/4 cup (200 mL) whipping cream

METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Dry cod steaks, then brush with 1 tbsp (15 mL) of oil and season well.
 2. Cut four pieces of foil, each large enough to enclose a steak. Put one steak on each piece of foil, fold edges together to make a roomy parcel, and crimp to seal. Lay steaks on baking sheet and cook for 15 minutes.
 3. Meanwhile, peel and grate shallot. Rinse broccoli and trim into small florets.
 4. Heat remaining oil in frying pan and fry shallot until translucent.

5. Add broccoli to pan, stems down, with 2/3 cup (150 mL) of water, and bring to boil, then cover and simmer for 4-5 minutes until broccoli is barely tender. Remove lid, raise heat, and cook until only 1-2 tbsp (25 mL) of water remain in pan. Do not let broccoli burn.
 6. Rinse and dry tarragon. Reserve four sprigs as garnish, then strip leaves off the rest and add to broccoli. Stir in cream, season to taste with salt and pepper, and keep warm.
 7. Remove foiled steaks from oven, unwrap, and transfer onto four warmed plates. Spoon broccoli over fish, garnish with tarragon, and serve.

SERVES 4**rd.ca**

For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!

**Horoscopes****AVATAR VENUS****ARIES****MARCH 21-APRIL 20**

Have a health problem checked out. Get resentment off your chest before you explode. Take radical action, if necessary.

**TAURUS****APRIL 21-MAY 21**

A quarrelsome person is being selfish. Tasks will blunt the impact of a fantasy romance. Get cracking on solving a puzzling predicament.

**GEMINI****MAY 22-JUNE 21**

A headstrong person refuses to co-operate. A financial rumour causes a fleeting anxiety attack. A chatty friend criticizes your talent for rejection.

**CANCER****JUNE 22-JULY 22**

Continue to have faith in your instincts. Too many coincidences will raise eyebrows. Friends are waiting for promises to be kept.

**LEO****JULY 23-AUG 23**

Give a needy person a handout. Something's got to give in a miserable relationship. Make a break for freedom.

**VIRGO****AUG 24-SEPT 22**

A fateful encounter with a dutiful man takes place. There'll be a lot of stress involved. Avoid mindless chit-chat with a passionate person.

**LIBRA****SEPT 23-OCT 23**

You need to get away. You've got nothing to left to lose. An appreciative person responds to an invitation.

**SCORPIO****OCT 24-NOV 22**

Listen carefully to a battle plan. Hopes can now bloom into reality. An aloof person has confidence in a rebel.

**SAGITTARIUS****NOV 23-DEC 21**

Your amusement reaches new heights. Organization is crucial to efficiency. A pragmatic person wants to show devotion.

**CAPRICORN****DEC 22-JAN 20**

A hypercritical person throws a wrench into plans. Avoid disturbing the peace by rushing in to fix things. Use your imagination to find satisfaction.

**AQUARIUS****JAN 21-FEB 18**

A delightful answer will be given. Pamper yourself with treats. Your achievement impresses everyone.

**PISCES****FEB 19-MARCH 20**

A pesky little pest must be confronted. An interfering hypocrite comes to grief. You can anticipate a change in strategy.



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